

CIA SOUGHT VAINLY TO EXHUME OSWALD'S BODY, FILES SHOW

United Press International

Newly released files show the CIA, suspicious that the Soviets may have brainwashed Lee Harvey Oswald, sought unsuccessfully to exhume his corpse to see if his reported 1959 suicide attempt was a Russian cover-up.

The CIA considered Oswald's alleged suicide attempt four years before he killed John F. Kennedy "one of the crucial points in Oswald's experiences in the Soviet Union," according to an internal Warren Commission memo made public yesterday under the Freedom of Information Act.

The CIA wanted to dig up Oswald's corpse and closely examine a scar on his left wrist, where he supposedly "deeply slashed" himself upon learning on Oct. 21, 1959, he had been denied Soviet citizenship.

THE CIA FELT "if the suicide incident is a fabrication, the time supposedly spent by Oswald in recovering . . . in a Moscow hospital could have been spent by him in Russian Secret Police custody being coached, brainwashed, etc., for his appearance at the American embassy" three days later to renounce his U.S. citizenship, the memo said.

Oswald's body never was dug up, and the commission made no final judgment on whether his suicide attempt was authentic.

Followers of conspiracy theories contend that one strong possibility is Oswald was a Soviet agent when he shot Kennedy.

A copy of the memo from one commission assistant counsel, W. David Slawson, to another, Arlen Specter, was made available to UPI by Michael Levy, a freelance researcher who obtained thousands of assassination documents through an FOI request.

The commission's 1964 report said an autopsy showed Oswald had a scar on his left wrist — the kind which could have been caused by a suicide attempt. It said medical records furnished by the Soviet government stated Oswald was treated Oct. 21-28, 1959, at the Botkinskaya Hospital in Moscow for a self-inflicted wound on the left wrist.

The newly released memo revealed CIA skepticism because Oswald reportedly slashed his wrist so deeply "that had he not been found a few minutes later by his Russian tourist guide he would supposedly have died."

"IT IS THIS suicide (attempt) which is supposed to have convinced the Russians of his sincerity and caused them to change their minds about letting him enter the Soviet Union. It is, therefore, a crucial occurrence," the memo said.

Although Oswald's expatriation attempt was rejected, he eventually was allowed to stay in the Soviet Union until June 1962.

Oswald was killed by Jack Ruby in the Dallas police station two days after the assassination, and the commission memo said that three months later FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was "reluctant to exhume Oswald's body as requested by the CIA."

Slawson said he did not want "to force the FBI's hand on this point" unless examination of Oswald's decayed remains "could establish . . . that the scar represents what was once a deep wound of the kind which could cause sudden death by bleeding."



LEE HARVEY OSWALD

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